

BY STAFF SGT. MATTHEW ROSINE

# A TIME FOR FAMILIES

**D**eploying Airmen and their families get a special gift before they depart Hill Air Force Base, Utah — time to spend together.

They spend time away from the hustle and bustle of pre-deployment life, to be together as a family, at the Hill Air Expeditionary Forces Retreat at the Wolf Creek Resort and Club.

“This retreat is for Airmen and their families,” said Chaplain (Capt.) David Haltom, 75th Air Base Wing chaplain and originator of the retreat idea. “At the retreat, we give them the time to work through tough deployment issues and hopefully to grow closer as a family.”

Nestled at the foot of the Wasatch Mountains outside Ogden, the retreat provides deploying Airmen and their families private time to discuss serious issues like finances and the other burdens of separation. The Hill chapel also offers a variety of services, such as counseling and childcare, to help families better cope with deployments.

While the retreat is a chapel-sponsored event, the chapel staff only encourages families to meet their individual needs at the retreat, the captain said.

Families stay three days and two nights in million-dollar homes for free. Each family also receives more than \$600 in free “goodies,” like family portraits, DVDs and Build-A-Bears for the children. Families can also spend time together taking part in a variety of activities, from hiking and horseback riding, to golfing and skiing — all for free.

People thought the deal was too good to be true because it only costs a small deposit to attend, the captain said.

Resort general manager Bill Cox and his staff have supported retreats for the past two years.

“Our resort is family oriented and being able to support the families of Airmen being deployed just really got the whole team rallied to this cause,” Mr. Cox said. “Our motivator is very much just to do this as a community gesture to support the air base,” Mr. Cox said.

That gesture has made a difference to many Airmen and their families.

“I believe very strongly in the program,” said Trish Hammond. Her husband is Maj. Todd Hammond, commander of the 388th Equipment Maintenance Squadron. “I came up with 18 reasons why I couldn’t go. Now, I’m so glad I went. I

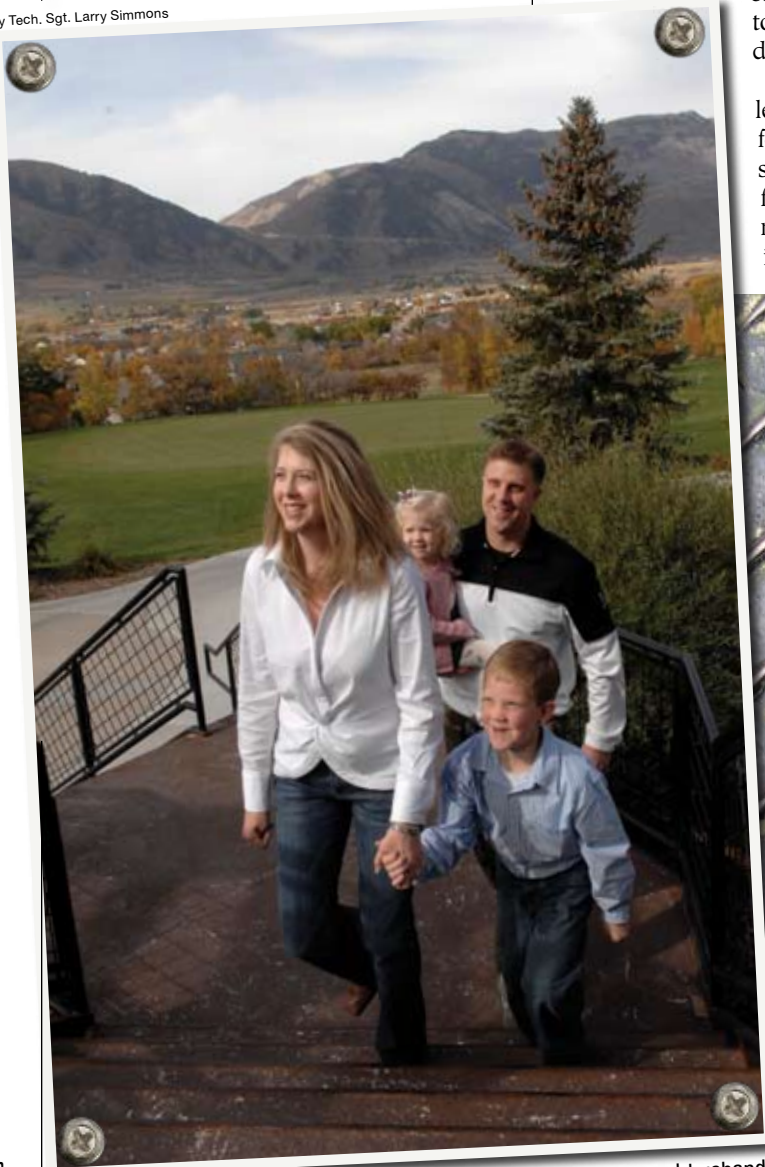
went for my family. I went for my spouse. And I went more, I think, for me.”

The mother of two said, “I believe in it so much that I came up during the last retreat and stayed the weekend to help. And, I’m coming up in December to help.”

Mrs. Hammon said, “I’m yelling and screaming at the top of my lungs to everyone I know, ‘You need to come up here and do this.’”

“If your loved one is leaving, it is important for your family,” she said. “It is important for your spouse but most importantly, it is important for you.”

by Tech. Sgt. Larry Simmons



Trish Hammond holds hands with her 8-year-old son, Braydon, and husband Maj. Todd Hammond carries their 3-year-old daughter, Abby, to the Wolf Creek Resort and Club café for lunch.

